

**South Dakota National Guard
Public Affairs Office
2823 West Main St.
Rapid City, S.D. 57702**

**Phone 605-737-6721
E-mail PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

South Dakota National Guard unit will mobilize for deployment

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota Army National Guard will provide an embedded training team that will serve a one-year deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

The South Dakota Embedded Training Team is tentatively scheduled to report to Fort Riley, Kan., in late January, 2008. There, it will complete a 60-day training program that will focus on specific skills required for the assigned mission of providing training and mentorship to an assigned infantry battalion within the Afghanistan National Army.

“We have a great team put together,” said Maj. John Weber, commander of the ETT. “We are all looking forward to the mission and the opportunity to work with the Afghan military.”

In June, the Fort Meade based 1st Battalion, 196th Regiment (General Studies), SDARNG, was tasked to provide the pre-mobilization training, administrative and logistical support for the 16-member embedded training team. The team is composed of Soldiers from various SDARNG units and organized based on specific individual skill sets and strong leadership traits. The team selected its last member yesterday.

“The diversity in the various skills and a South Dakota work ethic is the strength of our team,” said Weber. “We bring a great deal to the mission with both our military and civilian backgrounds.”

The team will include a commander and sergeant major as well as a staff that manages operations and plans, logistics, personnel, intelligence and communications. As mentors and trainers, the South Dakotans will work directly with the Afghan Soldiers.

Since the September 2001 terrorist attacks on America, the South Dakota National Guard has mobilized more than 3,100 Soldiers and 700 Airmen in support of the Global War on Terror.

About 140 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard are currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. More than 4,000 National Guard men and women are still serving in a

non-active duty status in South Dakota and continue to provide support for state and national emergencies and homeland defense.